If your goal is to be published and then cited by a court, strengthen the credibility of your writing and analysis by validating most of your sentences with substantial, thorough research and footnotes from a variety of relevant sources.

Start with the key sources you’ve already identified
Your chosen case or topic will involve key cases, statutes, or regulations. Read these, and then develop your research using tools and research strategies that support your goals.

Learn the procedural history of key cases with Shepard’s®

• Understand how the lower and appellate courts have treated the key cases you will repeatedly cite. Shepardize® each case by clicking Shepardize this Document.

• Identify any applicable lower court and appellate court decisions using Appellate History.

• To easily understand the appellate history, click Map for a graphical map.
Understand the holdings of the prominent cases with Table of Authorities

Get a strong grasp of how the court reached its conclusion. This enables you to write meaningful analysis and arguments. To do this, read all of the main sources cited by the court to support its decision. How do you identify the cases the court relied on most heavily?

• From a case’s Shepard’s Report, click Table of Authorities to find a list of all the sources cited by the court in its opinion.

• Use the discussion bars, located on the right side, to identify which cases were central to your case’s holding. The more bars a case has, the more your case relied upon it.

• Read the cases with three or four bars first. If a case has since been treated negatively for the same issue, include this in a footnote or in your analysis.

Research the background of your topic

After the introduction, writers commonly discuss the legal background of the issue to provide context for their legal argument. This may include a summary of the black letter law, an explanation of how the court came to its conclusion or the legal response to your case or issue.

Black Letter Law:

• From an open document, click Topic Summaries under About this Document.

• From Explore Content go to Secondary Materials, then Legal Topic Summaries.

Topic Summaries quickly and accurately explain a legal concept, providing a precise definition, necessary legal standards, and hyperlinks to on-point authority and analytical sources.
The Legal Response to your Case, Statute, or Regulation:

- Shepardize the case, statute, or regulation.

- Click on Citing Decisions to identify all of the cases that have cited to your source. Use the Grid view to quickly make sense of how other courts have treated your source over time.

- Diversify your sources with Other Citing Sources to view secondary sources that have cited your source, such as law review articles, treatises, briefs and motions. Use these to better understand the issue and provide support in your footnotes.

Understand how an underlying statute has changed

If a statute is central to your argument, learn its history and, where appropriate, incorporate it into your footnotes or analysis.

- Open the statute and Go to the Notes section to learn how it has changed over time. To see archived versions of this statute, click Archived Code Versions in the About this Document box.

- Next, review the Case Notes to quickly identify additional key cases that have interpreted this statute. Then, use Research References & Practice Aids to find secondary sources discussing the application of the statute.

- Finally, use Shepardize this Document to locate related Pending Legislation and access the Subsection Reports to effortlessly limit your search results to only the cases citing the relevant subsection of the statute.

Discuss how pending legislation may impact your analysis

Use Lexis Advance® Legislative Outlook tools, with legislative forecasting visuals, to see the probability of bill passage and discuss impact.
Conduct precise research on a specific, relevant issue
When reading a relevant case, note which sections are most relevant to your issue. Then, Shepardize by Headnote or use the Legal Issue Trail to pinpoint additional, suitable resources.

Shepardize by Headnote:

• Open your case and Go to the LexisNexis Headnotes. Identify relevant Headnotes.

• Click Shepardize – Narrow by this Headnote to quickly obtain a list of all of the cases that have cited to that specific Headnote. Where applicable, include a string citation with these sources in your footnotes.

Legal Issue Trail:

• Open your case and click Activate Passages in the About this Document box.

• Lexis Advance will put a dotted box around every section of your case that another court has cited. Click inside the dotted box of any pertinent passage, taking care to avoid hyperlinks.

• The Legal Issue Trail will provide you with a list of cases that your case cited in this passage, as well as a list of all subsequent cases that have cited to this passage in your case.

• Click on any case title to quickly open the case to exactly where it cited this passage. These cases provide additional footnote support.
Pinpoint your issue using advanced search strategies

Use Advanced Search, above the red search box, to search within a specific section of a document, also referred to as segment searching.

- To search within the headline and lead paragraph of a news article, for example, go to Advanced Search > News, and type your search terms into the corresponding segment.

Lexis Advance has the largest collection of online news sources in the legal community with over 26,000 sources, including Law360, ALM, The Wall Street Journal, and the New York Times.

- To search only the titles of Treatises, go to Secondary Materials in Explore Content on Lexis Advance. Select Treatises, Practice Guides & Jurisprudence, then type your search terms, as Title(placeholder), into the red search box.

Cited by courts thousands of times, Lexis Advance has exclusive analytical content authored by leading experts in the legal community that will provide insight and give you a deeper understanding of key issues in more than 50 practice areas.

Set an Alert to effortlessly stay informed about your topic

- After running a search in the Red Search Box, click on the Alert icon.

- Setup a customized alert to receive instant notifications about your topic as soon as new material is published. Under monitor, be sure also include Legal News, News, and Secondary Materials to stay up-to-date on the most recent, trending articles on your topic.

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